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2. German invasion of Russia, June, 1941.

Red Army officers and men desert by the thousands and tens of thousands. Towns and villages welcome the Germans as liberators. Peasants cheer the Germans in the belief that collective farms will be abolished and private land ownership restored. Russian prisoners volunteer for service with the German army.

The Wehrmacht had expected to find disaffection, but nothing like this. The American officers and students of strategy who have made a study of what the Germans did and what they failed to do believe that if this disaffection had been properly exploited, the Germans could have won a decisive victory in Russia. What were the psychological blunders which kept the Germans from this victory? The answer to this question, as it emerges from the German experience, seems bound to affect U.S. long-range strategy and planning. It may, for example, lead to re-examination of the use of the atomic bomb, for the evidence suggests that the wise use of psychological weapons might produce more sensational effects in Russia than the infudicious use of atomic weapons.

II. The story in detail.

The Barbarossa plan of the German army had a psychological warfare annex which correctly predicted that there would be great scope for psychological warfare in Russia.

But Hitler, Rosenberg, Koch, Himmler, Goering, Sauckel and other Nazis had different — and conflicting — ideas which led to the brutal exploitation of the Russian population.

By the spring of 1942, the German army had 200,000 volunteers of Soviet nationality. Count Stauffenberg worked out a plan to use more and General Keessing devised a successful project to win the support of the Caucasian peasants.

But Hitler forbade the formation of new volunteer units, and the cruelty of the Nazi rule brought about an increase of Red Army resistance and partisan activity.

In August, 1942, Vlassov was captured.

(Vlassov's record and character. His prediction that Russia could only be beaten with the aid of Russians. His first successful propaganda efforts.)

Although certain German officers and the Russian experts of the Foreign Office looked upon Vlassov as a tool, Hitler refused to permit any political movement which would make possible a Russian puppet government.

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT

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In spring of 1943, there were 750,000 Soviet volunteers in the German Army, but Hitler finally killed the first Vlasov movement.

By November of 1944, however, the need of manpower was so great that Hitler succeeded in persuading Vlasov to make some use of Vlasov.

Vlasov formed the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia.

At the same time the Union of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Partisan Army succeeded in getting control of large areas of Galicia behind the Soviet lines.

But all this was too late. Vlasov's small forces played only an insignificant part in the closing days of the war, although 15 percent of the effectives of the German army were Soviet nationals.

Vlasov voluntarily surrendered to the Americans and was turned over to the Soviets.

III. The lessons for the United States.

There is nothing in the German experience which suggests that a war against the Soviet Union would be easy or desirable; nothing which suggests that any group of dissidents in the Soviet Union could accomplish much under present circumstances.

But the German experience does indicate that dissidence is endemic in the Soviet Union and that this dissidence could be exploited to great effect by an enemy of the Soviet Union.

For this reason, there is no harm, but every advantage, in letting the Kremlin know today that we are aware of the disaffection and that if it ever forced us into war we would use every means to sway the peoples of the Soviet Union. Letting the Kremlin know this might prove as great a deterrent as President Truman's statement that he would not hesitate to use the atomic bomb.

As for the bomb, study of the German experience raises the question whether we should not reconsider its use, taking into account the possibility that used unwisely it might help to rally the people behind the Soviet regime. At least there might be entire areas which might be spared atomic fission and subjected to "psychological fission".

Finally in our war contingency plans, the land ownership and other problems call for us to study as, say, logistics and bombing targets.

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